



MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE State Summary

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Surveillance

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 2001 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the Social Security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential.

Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 2001 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes which do file these certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

MARRIAGE

Counts and Rates

In 2001, 37,628 marriages were celebrated in Louisiana; a decrease of 2,933 marriages from the year 2000 total of 40,561 (*Table MD1*).

The **marriage rate** measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population.

Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, Louisiana's 2001 marriage rate was 8.4 marriages per 1,000 population. This rate was lower than the 2000

rate of 9.1, but equal to that of the national rate for 2001 (*Figure MD1, Table MD1*). After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, Louisiana's marriage rates were stable during the past decade, remaining above 9.0 marriages per 1,000 population from 1989 until 2001 (*Figure MD1, Table MD1*).

National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1990s, but the state rate rose to a level slightly higher than the

national rate as the decade progressed.

Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana residents if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of brides and grooms are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside their area of residence.

**Figure MD1. Marriage Rates
Louisiana and United States, 1986-2001**

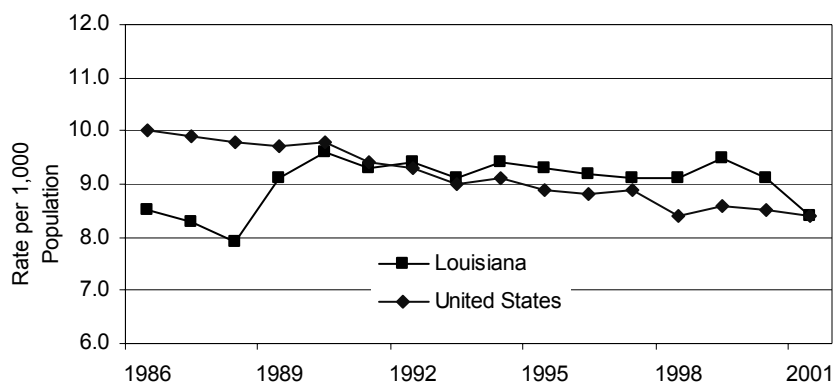


Table MD1.
Numbers and Rates of Marriages
Louisiana and United States, 1986-2001

Year	Louisiana		United States	
	Number	Rate ⁺	Rate ⁺	
1986	37459	8.5	10.0	
1987	36185	8.3	9.9	
1988	33974	7.9	9.8	
1989	38574	9.1	9.7	
1990	40443	9.6	9.8	
1991	39161	9.3	9.4	
1992	40053	9.4	9.3	
1993	39364	9.1	9.0	
1994	40405	9.4	9.1	
1995	40516	9.3	8.9	
1996	40221	9.2	8.8	
1997	39662	9.1	8.9	
1998	39544	9.1	8.4	
1999	41343	9.5	8.6	
2000	40561	9.1	8.5	
2001	37628	8.4	8.4	

⁺Rate per 1,000 population

Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

Age of the Bride and Groom

In 2001 the largest proportion of Louisiana brides (27.0%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were evenly distributed between the 20-24 and 25-29 year age groups, at 22.5% and 22.2%, respectively (*Table MD2*).

Table MD2.
Number of Marriages by Age of Groom and Age of Bride
Louisiana, 2001

Age of Groom	Total	Age of Bride														
		Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+	Unk.
Total	37628	9	494	2783	10170	7748	5149	3835	2987	1926	1139	534	312	187	165	190
Under 15	****	0	0	****	****	0	0	0	****	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15-17	67	****	30	23	9	****	****	****	****	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-19	1151	****	181	583	311	46	11	****	5	****	0	0	0	0	0	7
20-24	8479	****	232	1702	5166	1038	230	64	20	5	****	****	0	0	****	15
25-29	8369	****	37	339	3334	3354	919	269	78	22	****	****	0	0	0	12
30-34	5952	0	7	94	899	2119	1844	646	224	76	19	****	****	0	0	20
35-39	4201	0	****	16	294	776	1202	1150	519	184	40	11	0	0	****	5
40-44	3277	0	****	10	73	253	587	912	891	396	116	25	6	****	0	****
45-49	2274	****	****	****	31	91	211	446	679	544	200	45	15	****	0	5
50-54	1555	****	0	****	14	30	82	216	343	392	341	96	25	5	****	****
55-59	894	0	0	****	12	14	31	71	140	180	221	159	45	11	9	0
60-64	505	0	****	0	****	8	14	34	53	70	107	94	86	31	5	****
65-69	313	0	****	0	****	****	5	9	15	30	58	54	65	52	18	****
70+	360	0	0	0	****	****	****	6	7	18	28	43	65	75	106	5
Unk.	227	0	0	7	21	13	9	7	11	8	5	****	****	8	23	111

**** in cell indicates count is greater than 0 and less than 5.

The average age of Louisiana brides in 2001 was 30.6 years. The average for grooms was 33.0 years. Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in Louisiana (*Table MD3*).

Table MD3.
Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms
Louisiana, 1992-2001

Year of Marriage	Average Age in Years		Median Age in Years	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4
1997	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7
1998	30.0	32.4	26.7	28.8
1999	30.0	32.4	26.8	28.9
2000	30.5	33.0	27.2	29.4
2001	30.6	33.0	27.2	29.4

During the past decade there was a decrease in the rates of marriage in the 15-19 and 20-24 year age groups for both men and women, and an increase in marriage rates among both sexes for older age groups (30 years and older). This same period also showed a steady increase in marriage rates for women aged 25-29, but a fluctuating rate among men in the same age group. Generally, men are more likely to marry at 25 years and older than women are (*Table MD4, Figures MD2 and MD3*).

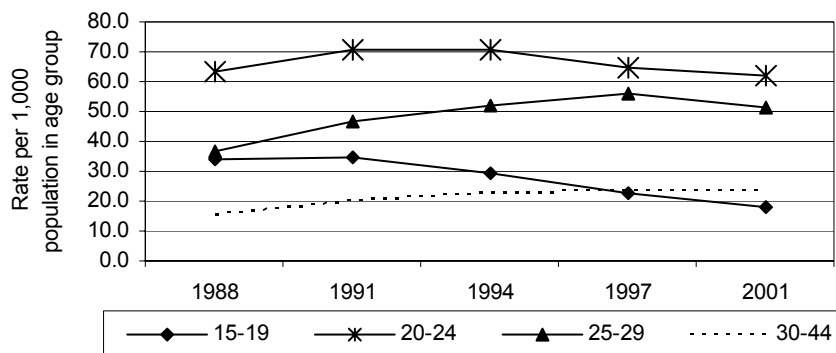
Table MD4.
Marriage Rates⁺ by Sex and Age
Louisiana, 1988-2001 Selected Years

Year	15-19		20-24		25-29		30-44	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1988	34.0	13.4	63.6	62.2	37.0	46.5	15.5	19.8
1991	34.7	13.6	70.7	66.6	46.9	67.4	20.3	24.7
1994	29.4	11.5	70.4	65.1	52.1	63.3	22.6	26.9
1997	22.6	8.6	64.9	55.6	55.7	64.8	23.3	27.9
2001*	18.0	6.6	61.9	52.6	51.4	57.6	23.5	27.6

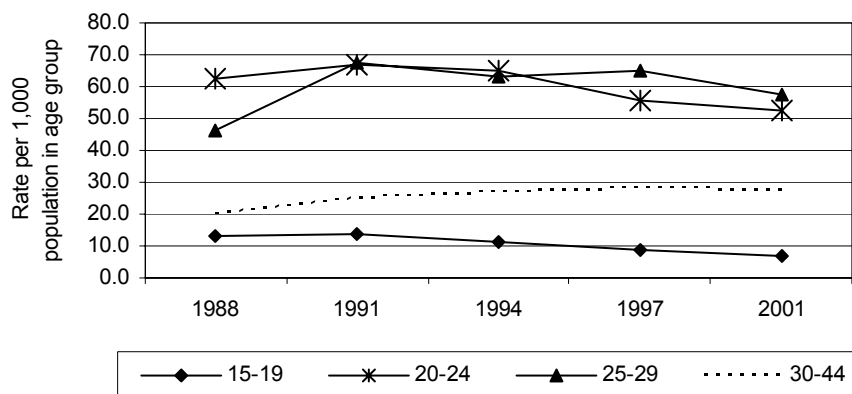
⁺Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population

* Note: Detailed population estimates for 2001 were not available at the time of publication, so 2000 population estimates were used to calculate age-specific rates.

Figure MD2. Marriage Rates among Females by Age Group
Louisiana, 1988-2001



**Figure MD3. Marriage Rates among Males by Age Group
Louisiana, 1988-2001**



Prior Marital Status

In Louisiana in 2001, 45.0% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom; 55.4% of brides and 55.9% of grooms stated that they had never been married (*Table MD5*). In 21.3% marriages in Louisiana in the year 2001, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced; 33.3% of all brides and 33.4% of all grooms stated that they were previously divorced.

**Table MD5.
Number of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom
Louisiana, 2001**

Previous Marital Status of Groom	Previous Marital Status of Bride					
	Total	Never Married	Widowed	Divorced	Marriage Annulled	Unknown
All	37628	20846	1137	12545	88	3012
Never Married	21044	16946	182	3821	22	73
Widowed	979	136	345	479	****	18
Divorced	12569	3683	588	8004	19	275
Marriage Annulled	112	37	****	22	45	****
Unknown	2924	44	18	219	****	2642

**** in cell indicates count is greater than 0 and less than 5.

In the past ten years, Louisiana has experienced a slight but steady decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, however, the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced has remained stable during the same period (*Table MD6*).

**Table MD6.
Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status
Louisiana, 1988-2001 Selected Years**

Year	Never Married			Divorced		
	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both
1988	45.9	46.2	38.0	29.3	29.4	17.9
1991	61.9	62.4	50.5	32.8	32.3	20.4
1994	60.6	61.1	49.1	34.3	34.4	21.7
1997	58.5	59.3	47.2	35.3	35.4	22.5
2001	55.4	55.9	45.0	33.3	33.4	21.3

Note: Percent of never married and divorced are substantially lower in 1988 as the number of records coded as unknown were substantially greater than in subsequent years.

In the year 2001, the median age of couples who stated they were both previously married was approximately seventeen years higher than those marriages between never-married brides and grooms (*Table MD7*).

Table MD7.
Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage
by Previous Marital Status
Louisiana, 2001

Previous Marital Status	Average Age		Median Age	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
All	30.6	33.0	27.2	29.4
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	24.4	26.3	22.6	24.5
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	30.2	36.5	28.0	34.0
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	33.4	32.2	31.5	30.3
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	40.7	43.9	39.1	42.1

Race of Bride and Groom

In the year 2001, 96.1% of Louisiana marriages were between brides and grooms of the same race. This proportion excluded brides or grooms of unknown race and assumed that brides and grooms of *other races* i.e. other than black or white were of the same-race. In 68.3% of marriages, both were white. In 27.1% of marriages, both were black (*Table MD8, MD9*). 3.6% of total marriages were mixed race and 2.2% of total marriages were mixed race marriages between whites and blacks (*Table MD8, MD9*). If brides and grooms both categorized as "other" were assumed to be of distinct races, mixed marriages would account for 4.3% of all marriages, and same-race marriages for 95.3% of all marriages.

Table MD8.
Number of Marriages by
Race of Groom and Race of Bride
Louisiana, 2001

Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	37628	26432	10543	585	68
White	26282	25700	300	256	26
Black	10792	542	10207	38	5
Other	498	174	32	291	****
Unknown	56	16	****	0	36

**** in cell indicates count is greater than 0 and less than 5.

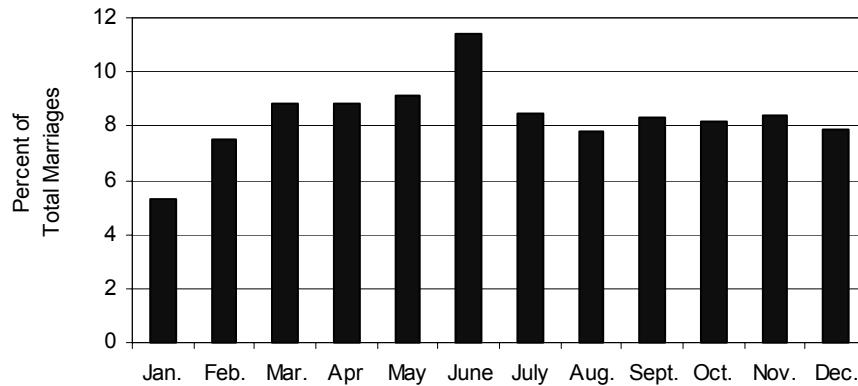
Table MD9.
Percent of Total Marriages by
Race of Groom and Race of Bride
Louisiana, 2001

Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	100.0	70.2	28.0	1.6	0.2
White	69.8	68.3	0.8	0.7	0.1
Black	28.7	1.4	27.1	0.1	0.0
Other	1.3	0.5	0.1	0.8	0.0
Unknown	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1

Month of Marriage

On average, there were 3,136 marriages celebrated in Louisiana each month in the year 2001. In January, the number decreased to 1,983 (5.3% of all marriages); in June, it increased to 4,308 or 11.4% of all marriages (*Figure MD4, Table MD10*).

**Figure MD4. Percentage of Marriages by Month of Occurrence
Louisiana, 2001**



**Table MD10.
Number and Percent of Marriages
By Month of Occurrence
Louisiana, 2001**

Month	Number	Percent	Daily Average
Total	37628	100.0	103
January	1983	5.3	64
February	2824	7.5	101
March	3323	8.8	107
April	3306	8.8	110
May	3412	9.1	110
June	4308	11.4	144
July	3201	8.5	103
August	2936	7.8	95
September	3130	8.3	104
October	3082	8.2	99
November	3144	8.4	105
December	2979	7.9	96

DIVORCE**Counts**

Divorce reports for 2001 were submitted by 52 parishes in Louisiana, which represented 81% of all Louisiana parishes. Many of the certificates that were submitted had incomplete information. There were a total of 14,430 divorces in the 52 parishes which submitted divorce counts. No counts were available for 12 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (*For divorce counts refer to Table MDP1 in Marriage and Divorce Parish Tables in the diskette*).